

Homer-Center High School's Health Careers Club held a blood drive on March 2, 2012, at the high school gym. "The blood drive is important for the school and is a valuable community service," as stated by Mrs. Cathy Bonarrigo, Health Careers Club Advisor and High School Nurse. She is a veteran to the blood drive community service program and has been involved for the last ten years. "Blood is essential for saving lives. One unit can save up to three lives, and students learn it's important to consider the needs of others," she said. She also stated the importance of the students role in the blood drive. "Students run the canteen station and walk donors after giving blood," she explained. "Health Careers Club has been doing this blood drive every year, except the two years the school was being renovated."

Donors were excited and ready to give back to the community. Taylor Bernat, a senior at Homer-Center High School, was excited to not only give blood but to bake cookies for the canteen station. When asked about why she would not only donate but also bring cookies she said, "It's a good cause and there is nothing better than a good treat."

Excitement was also seen during the day in other students. Evan Strittmatter, a junior at Homer-Center High School, donated this day and had a good experience. "I gave blood to help people and the nurses were very helpful," he said. He said that this is his second time giving and that he would definitely give again.

A substitute teacher at Homer-Center, Ms. Amanda Spence, was seen donating blood where she explained that she had a very sincere reason to give blood. "When I was young I had to get a blood transfusion and last year I needed two," she explained. She says, "I feel like I need to give back to what people have given to me." Ms. Spence is a good example of the warm hearts that came out to give blood at the drive.

Another way the blood drive helps the school is through scholarship rewards. The American Red Cross supports the school through the Making A Difference Educational Scholarship Program. Mrs. Bonnarigo explained that if the school does at least two blood drives a year, the American Red Cross will give back to the school. The money is based upon the productive units of blood that was received between the two blood drives. Homer-Center High School is eligible for this scholarship through two blood drives that it held this year, one in the fall with the National Honor Society Club and the one held recently by the Health Careers Club. Based on these two drives, eighty units of blood have been collected meaning the school would receive two hundred fifty dollars of scholarship money.

Based upon the success of the two drives and the enthusiasm toward them, the school's participation is essential. These activities not only show students that giving back and donating blood is important, they give the school valuable rewards for hosting such beneficial events.

**Written by:**

Evan Bellas and Sarah Henry

**Photo of the Week**

Emily Topeka and Briannea Kmetz-Fisher help organize Homer-Center's Blood Drive.